

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Statement on the Department of Justice Report on the Law Enforcement Response to the 2022 Shooting in Uvalde, Texas

January 18, 2024

In May 2022, Jill and I traveled to Uvalde to grieve 21 students and educators senselessly and tragically gunned down at Robb Elementary School. Twenty-one souls stolen from us in a place where they are supposed to feel safe—their classroom.

Following this tragedy, my administration conducted a review to determine lessons learned from the response that day and best practices to ensure a swifter and more effective response to future active shooter incidents. Today's report makes clear several things: that there was a failure to establish a clear command and control structure, that law enforcement should have quickly deemed this incident an active shooter situation and responded accordingly, and that clearer and more detailed plans in the school district were required to prepare for the possibility that this could occur. There were multiple points of failure that hold lessons for the future, and my team will work with the Justice Department and Department of Education to implement policy changes necessary to help communities respond more effectively in the future.

No community should ever have to go through what the Uvalde community suffered. After the Uvalde shooting, the families of the victims turned their pain into purpose and pushed for the passage of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, the most significant gun safety legislation in nearly 30 years, which I signed into law. And I continue to take historic executive action, including the establishment of the first-ever White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention.

Congress must now pass commonsense gun safety laws to ensure that mass shootings like this one don't happen in the first place. We need universal background checks, we need a national "red flag" law, and we must ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. The families of Uvalde—and all American communities—deserve nothing less.

The longer we wait to take action, the more communities like Uvalde will continue to suffer due to this epidemic of gun violence.

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Names: Biden, Jill T.

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